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TELEVISION friday

‘Tower of Terror’ a reel thrill for Disney

By Jim Abbott
OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

Synergy is a big thing at Disney, and they really know how to use it. Filming has just begun on a two-hour Halloween movie, *Tower of Terror*, to air on *The Wonderful World of Disney*, which returns to ABC on Sept. 28.

The *Tower* story was “inspired” by the free-fall attraction, *Tower of Terror*, at Walt Disney World, and the Hollywood sets are designed to duplicate the interior of that attraction. The movie stars Steve Guttenberg, Nia Peeples and Kirsten Dunst.

So why film on the West Coast, with Disney-MGM Studios here in Central Florida?

“I think it’s logistics more than anything else,” said Disney spokesman Craig Martinelli. He said the production is scheduled to shoot some exteriors at the Florida attraction, probably this summer.

CHANNEL SURFING

‘Spawn’ emerges at midnight

Grisly and dark in its lighter moments, Todd McFarlane’s *Spawn* (debuting at midnight today) is adult animation intent on annihilation.

It’s definitely not for the Saturday morning cartoon set, meriting a rating of TV-M that warns against the under-17 crowd tuning in. *Spawn* is the first offering from HBO’s new animation division.

McFarlane’s *Spawn* comic books, introduced in 1992, are available in 15 countries. They also have spawned a line of toy action figures and a feature film due in August.

Spawn is a former CIA agent named Al Simmons.

Violently killed in the line of duty, he cut a deal with the devil, known as Malebolgia, for a second shot on Earth.

Divorced dads, crooks are new theme

Sitcoms about teachers were the copycat theme of last year’s development season.

This spring, after only two networks’ presentations, there are already two sitcoms about divorced fathers raising two daughters alone — *The Tony Danza Show* on NBC, and *The Tom Show*, starring Tom Arnold, on The WB — and two dramas featuring crooks who turn over a new leaf to help fight crime.

NBC’s crooks, in *Players*, are parolees working undercover to help the FBI. The WB’s *Three* offers two men, an international jewel thief and a computer hacker, and a woman, a con artist trained in martial arts.

Wire services were used in compiling this report.

A Reel Thrill For Disney

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